

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Existing LDC

Strengths of the Existing LDC

The City of Flagstaff LDC has a number of strengths as summarized below:

- It provides regulations for the control and orderly use of land within the City;
- It ensures that incompatible uses are separated;
- It provides administrative processes and procedures;
- It provides for the health, safety and general welfare of the community;
- It includes good ideas for the preservation of trees and to provide flexibility specific to a use or a parcel;
- The City's lighting standards have protected Flagstaff's night skies and resulted in the City being the first International Dark Sky City;
- The City's Design Guidelines and Standards have ensured that new development is in keeping with Flagstaff's unique architectural vernacular; and
- It provides some tools that have allowed staff and the City Council to creatively address the challenge of providing affordable housing in the community.

Weaknesses of the Existing LDC

While the LDC has many strengths, it also has some significant weaknesses that include the following:

- While the LDC is certainly comprehensive, it is not in "*a form which is comprehensive, straightforward, and easily understood and usable*". Indeed, the LDC's complex concepts and standards as well as its weak organizational structure have made it very hard for citizens and staff to use the document.
- The LDC is essentially a "Euclidian" or conventional code that separates land uses into distinctly different land use categories. In its current format of segregating land uses it illustrates a general lack of relevancy and unresponsiveness to address new market directions and emerging trends within the planning profession and development community, such as Smart Growth and the promotion of mixed-use concepts that have been proven in many cities across the US.
- The LDC can be difficult to use and interpret, especially as it includes both Euclidian and performance-based provisions.
- Numerous amendments over the years have led to a disjointed code that lacks good internal or external cross references. It is also not logically organized and many development standards are hard to find.
- In general the LDC lacks consistency with the Regional Plan, and in some respects fails to implement it properly.
- Some provisions (such as the measurement of building height and the method for determining tree preservation on a parcel) produce results inconsistent with community goals.
- In general the LDC lacks consistency, clarity and predictability. This has been a frequent concern to citizens and developers.
- The LDC includes an unnecessary number of zoning districts – 39 in total with 32 actually mapped on the zoning map (both "Established" and "new" created in 1991).

- As noted previously, the majority of the LDC is at least 17 years old (some parts are much older).